

Digital Story Discussion Questions

Questions should be used to guide conversation about supporting youth who are coping with mental health challenges. These are questions created by youth. These are questions youth want you to discuss.

Before video:

1. Think about what you know about mental illness. List any facts you can think of.
2. What experiences have you, or someone you know had with mental illness?

Video:

Kelsey's story

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl9eo6yHCtl>

Mari's story

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2l-bt3L_aE

After video:

3. A digital story gives you a visual and auditory perspective of a youth experience with mental illness.
 - a. What images did you see in each youth's story? What message or feeling did the pictures give you?
 - b. What were the songs the youth chose? What message or feeling did each song give you?
4. At the end of each digital story, how did you feel? What message do you think each of these youth is trying to tell?
5. When you view each youth's personal stories:
 - a. What surprised you?
 - b. What did not surprise you?
 - c. What was the most memorable part of the story?
 - d. How did you feel while you watched the digital stories? What did you feel?
6. What do you already know about mental illness? List any information presented that was new to you, or information you'd like to know more about.
7. If you were working with youth from the story, what are specific actions, behaviors, and emotions that could be a sign the youth needed help?
8. Based on our stories, you can see that we have friends, get involved in activities such as sports & extra-curricular activities, earn good grades etc. Would you have known, or guessed that we have mental illnesses?
 - a. What could you do to find that out? What can you do to learn more about the needs of your students?
 - b. What did all the youth have in common?
 - c. What was unique about each youth?
9. Picture the students sitting in your classroom.
 - a. How many of them do you think deal with mental, emotional & behavior challenges?
 - i. The US Surgeon General reports that 10 percent of children and adolescents in the United States suffer from serious emotional and mental disorders that cause significant functional impairment in their day-to-day lives at home, in school and with peers. Knowing this statistic, how many students in your classes does this affect?
Statistic obtained from <http://www.NAMI.org>
 - b. Do you know if any students in your classes have a mental illness?
 - c. What could you do in your class to find out the mental and emotional needs of your students?
 - d. What would you do to support the needs of a student that has a mental illness?
 - e. What should you say to students to support mental, emotional and behavioral needs?
 - f. How should your classroom (or working environment) be set up to interact with students to create a classroom environment that will support mental, emotional and behavioral needs?

Digital Story Discussion Questions Continued

10. Give a specific example of something you have done to try to support a student's mental, emotional and behavior health needs. After watching the digital stories, would you continue to use that strategy of support? Why, or why not?
11. What challenge(s) have you experienced with supporting the mental & emotional needs of students? After viewing each youth's personal experience, can you think of any new strategies to use to support students in your classroom?
12. What actions and appearances do you think could make a youth feel comfortable approaching a teacher, school staff, or another adult?
13. Think of a youth that is a "behavior problem". Could this youth be making a cry for help? Besides making a student sit in the hallway or sending them to the principal, what other interventions could you use for the "behavior problem" student that is likely in need of help?
 - a. What other inventions can you use to reach a student before going for a punishment?
 - b. Why are punishments given before considering that a student may be struggling with an emotional challenge, or mental illness? Instead of reacting to "behavior problems" with a punishment, can anything be done to prevent these reactions?
14. As youth, we really want to stress the importance of how much of a difference a teacher makes. As an adult in a position that works with youth, how much of a difference do you think you have in the life of a student? Why?
15. In a position that works with youth, what do we need to know to support students who are experiencing mental illness? What skills do we need to support students who are experiencing mental illness?